DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 133 100 RC 009 558

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TITLE The Relationship Between Town and Country as a Factor Pertaining to Environmental Engineering and the Development of Ways of Life in Rural Areas.
INSTITUTION USSR Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk.
PUB DATE Aug 76
NOTE 13p.; Not available in hard copy due to small print size of original document. Paper presented at the World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th, Torun, Poland, August 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Agriculture; Community Development; *Environmental Influences; *Environmental Research; Foreign Countries; Humanization; Industrialization; *Life Style; Regional Planning; Relationship; *Rural Areas; Rural Economics; Social Factors; Socialism; *Social Systems; Socioeconomic Influences; Spatial Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *East Germany; World Congress of Rural Sociology (4th)

ABSTRACT

The relationship between town and country as a factor pertaining to the development of the environment and the ways of rural life is illustrated by the experience gained during the development of the German Democratic Republic. Within the framework of socialised production and the whole social and political life under socialist conditions, town and country form a single entity. The development of industry is generally a determinant factor for the town, which socially and politically form the centres of the working class. Determinant for the land are generally agriculture and the cooperative farmers who are closely allied to and approaching the working class. A peculiarity associated with agricultural production is that the natural environment is utilised for the satisfaction of human needs. The expression of the ability of agricultural industry to continually reproduce and improve the natural resources which have been used is an important problem associated with the society's development and growth. Fundamentally necessary conditions for this ability are created by the town's industries, the building industry, the sciences, educational facilities, and other social institutions. The achievements of the working class, the intelligentsia and others gainfully employed in society serve the agricultural industry. The financial and material means for the development of an intensive, highly productive agricultural industry are produced not only by the agricultural industry itself, but come, to a certain extent, from socialised funds. (NQ)

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RC009558

Wilhelm-Pieck-Universität Rostock

NATIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH
at the Academy of Sciences of
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

# The relationship between town and country as a factor pertaining to environmental engineering and the development of ways of life in rural areas

Fourth World Congress of Rural Sociology
Torun, Poland, 9. - 13. August 1976

Seminar 5: Spatial and Regional Planning as Strategies of Development.

Rostock 1976

Redaktion: Abt. Wissenschaftspublizistik der Wilhelm-Pieck-Universität Rostock, 25 Rostock, Vogelsang 13/14, Fernruf 36 95 77

Verantwortlicher Redakteur: Dipl.-Ges.-Wiss. Bruno Schrage

Herausgegeben von der Wilhelm-Pieck-Universität Rostock unter Genehmigungs-Nr. C 710-76

Satz und Druck: ODR, Werk II, Bereich Bad Doberan

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## The relationship between town and country as a factor pertaining ton environmental engineering and the development of ways of life in rural areas

The theme of the 4th World Congress of Rural Sociology, „The integrated development of social and natural resources. The contribution of rural sociology", and the theme of the seminar, „Environmental development and ways of life" involve a multitude of problems. One of these is the relation of society to the environment.

Opinions regarding this problem vary according to the philosophy of life and political standpoint of the observer. Bourgeoise authors maintain that fundamental antagonism exists between man and nature, and possible solutions in „integrated" development or some „organic" growth. They do not analyse the real causes of the crisis in the capitalist system, including the so called environmental crisis, and therefore draw false conclusions as to how further development can be ensured.

We believe that the suggested solutions are useless, since they either politically falsify or completely negate development within society. The relationship between man and nature forms only facet of the connection between society and environment, and must begin with an analysis of the development of society, because it is society which actively and consciously influences this interrelationship.

In this contribution, we wish to establish the relationship existing between town and country as one factor affecting the management of the environment by society and the evelopment of ways of life by theoretical considerations and to illustrate it by experience gained during the development of the GDR.

### On the relationship between society and environment *)

The relationship between society and environment is expressed in a multitude of ways, but largely and primarily by socialised production.

Production si „... the utilisation of nature by the individual within and by means of a certain form of Society". [1]

At hte XXVth Party Congress of the CPSU, Breshnew drew attention to the fact that nature can be utilised in various ways. „It is possible,

*) Environment is used here in the sense of the natural environment. Where used in a different connotation, this will be expressly stated.

and the history of mankind contains no lack of such exambles, to leave behind an infertile, lifeless, hostile space. But it is possible and necassary... to beautify nature, to help nature to develope its vitality more completely." [2]

In order to do this, however, definite social conditions must be created.

The starting point is the fact that the production process is a social one and cannot be regarded as the isolated activity of an individual as, is usually done in the capitalist world where private capitalist interests in an enterprise and in profit predominates. Under socialist conditions, the productions process bears a direct social character, and the fundamental differences regarding the measures taken in the management and protection of the environment reflects this fact. The resolutions and plans of the socialist countries united in the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA) for the development of their national economies during the period from 1976 to 1980 once again contain decisions ensuring comprehensive and fundamental solutions for the promotion of environmental protection.

A further aspect is that the natural environment can be cultivated by man, the natural environment can be reproduced to a certain extent. In the socialised production process, the natural resources are being ultilised ever more intensively. The growth of the population, the increasing requirements of society and scientific-technical demand economic growth.

Certain natural resources, raw materials, are being won by the extractive industry in the course of this process; their reserves are decreasing and cannot be reproduced. A further effect of the activities of the industry is the alteration of the natoural environment. The extraktive industry leaves behind it an exploited landscape which, however, can in principle be recultivated, although the expenditure of socialised work and financial effort involved is considerable.

Other natural resources, water and forests, are renewed or regenerated to a slight extent by natural processes but to a much greater exent by means of measures taken by society, as long as no pollution or destruction resulting in persitistent, irrepaiable damage has taken place.

Finally, there are natural resouces, particularly agriculturally tilled areas, which can be permanently utilised and improved by socialised reproductive measures and thus from the permanent basis for the life of society.

We cannot agree with the opinion of several authors in capitalist countries, including Mesarović and Pestel, who regard all raw materials, energy sources and resources [3] as being equally restrioted and, in some cases, mention only the negative consequences of scientific and technical progress, equating industrial development or more intensive agricultural utilisation of the soil with the destruction or pollution of the environment. Precisely progress in science and technology produces new opportunities for the protection and cultivation of the environment if the prevailing social conditions permit the utilisation of scientific and technical progress in the interests of the whole society.

It is in our opinion, in the development of these possibilities that the general problem of the integrated development of human and natural

resources" exists and it is precisely here that agrarian sociology is able to contribute towards the solution of the problem.

The draft of the Program of the Socialist Unity Party of German (SED) states and demands the following with regard to the further development of the GDR in this connection:

„The SED promotes the protection of the natural environment and its management in the interests of the continual improvement of the working and living conditions of the working population and in the interests of an efficient national economy... It is necessary to procet nature as the never-failing source of life, health, joy and material wealth in order that it may serve the happy life of future generations in the communist society." [4]

The sensible, rational and intensive utilisation of natural resources and the protection of the environment demand planned measures on the part of society. The purposeful expenditure of socialised effort, social finances and the conscious organisation of production in the interests of environmental protection are required together with scientific research and practical environmental protection measures.

The objective requirements are fulfilled to va. ying degrees in the different social orders. History shows us that political conditions and actions, such as imperialist wars, colonial exploitation and aggression based on antagonistic class relationships have persistantly disturbed and impaired man's relationship to his natural environment.

Thus, the major causes for disturbed relationship between society and environment are to be found in the social conditions or. mor explicitly, in antagonistic class relations.

The two „chasms" of which Mesarovic and Pestel speak, the „chasms" between man and nature and the „chasms" between „north" and „south", rich and poor..." [5] have their decisive causes in the social conditions mentioned. They restrict the ability of certain national economies to fully develope the socialised productive forces and to objectively ensure the production and protection of the natural environment.

In this connection, the contrast betweei town and country existing in capitalism is an important factor, then the quality of the relations between town and country affects the growth of the economy, the development of all productive forces and the utilisation of the environment in the interests of man's welfare.

**On the relationship between town and country in socialsm as a factor in environmental management**

The relationship between town and country in socialism as an important factor involved in environmental management are based on the objective, specific functions of these two spheres, i. e. town and country, in society.

Within the framework of socialised production and the whole social and political life under socialist conditions, town and country form a single entity. The social contrasts existing between town and country which exists under capitalist conditions have been overcome. Any differences which may still exist will be eliminated by the approximation of life in the country to that in the towns.

The development of industry is generally a determinant factor for the town. Socially and politically, the towns form the centres of the working class. The town is a political, intellectual and cultural centre, a centre of administration and communications.

Determinant for the land are generally agriculture and, from the political and social standpoints under socialist conditions, the cooperative farmers who are closely allied to and approaching the working class. A peculiarity associated with agricultural production is that it makes natural resources immediately utilisable for society. „Vegetable and animal husbandry mean, fundamentally, that nature, our natural environment, is utilised for the satisfaction of human needs." [9]

In agriculture, the natural resources which have been used can be continually reproduced and improved. The expression of this ability of the agricultural industry to improve natural resources which have been used an important problem associates with the development and growth of society. Fundamentally necessary conditions for this ability are created by the industries in the towns, the building industry, the sciences, educational facilities and other social institutions.

The achievements of the worsing class, the intelligentsia and others gainfully employed in society serve the agricultural industry. The financial and material means for the development of an intensive, highly productive agricultural industry are produced not only by the agricultural industry itself, but come, to a certain exenx, from socialised funds. This applies in particular to expenditure and facilities in servaing the communities of the rural territories concerned.

The relations between town and country in socialsm are characterised as follows:

1. A close political, economic, cultural and ideological alliance exists between the working class, which is concentrated primarily in the towns, and the cooperative farmers.

2. Socialised property with regard to means of production exists in all spheres of the national economy and all spheres are subject to socialist planning.

3. The all-round economic and scientific advancement of the agricultural industry, of industries in rural areas and of facilities serving the rural communities by society as a whole ensure the rapid growth of the productive forces and the stable development of new working and living conditions of a level corresponding to those in the towns for the rural population.

3

4. The standard of education in the country and the way of life of the rural population will become comparable to the standards avaiable to those living in towns.

Country life is approaching that in towns to an increasing extent from the economic, social, political, cultural and ideological standpoint. This trend is currently being assisted, and will continue to be assisted during the next few years in the agricultural industry of the GDR, by the transition to industrial forms of production. Such an agricultural industry using industrial production methods is in a praticularly good position to combine the further intensive utilisation of our ground and water resources with the continual reproduction and improvement of these resources in the interests of a high rate of economic growth and the maintenance of the welfare of society.

Specialist agriculture of the industrial type, however, is also an expression of the new relationship between town and country, i. e. of the comperable technical-economic levels of industry and agriculture.

**On industrial forms of production in the socialist agricultural industry of the GDR and the conscious management of the environment**

The most important criteria of industrial types of production in socialist agriculture are:

1. The increasing replacement of human labour by machines.
2. The planned concentration and specialisation of production and the development of large enterprises.
3. The elimination of certain tasks from the direct agricultural production process and the creation of specialised enterprises for spreading fertilizers, plant protection, and the transport and storage of agricultural products.
4. The production of large consignments of agricultural products of even quality with a high degree of economic efficiency.
5. The enowinement of the different production stages involved in and of the agricultural industry with the subcontracting and processing industries.
6. The application of the latest natural and social scientific knowledge.
7. The maintenance of an educational lead and the attainment of a high standard of education in the country.
8. Improvement of the working and living conditions and the formation of a socialist way of life in the country.

Production on industrial principles permits intensification of agricultural production and thus allows fulfillment of the requirements associated with the development of society, i. e. a high rate of economic growth and environmental management. The decisive factors serving intensification in the agricultural industry are:

- Complex mechanisation and the use of complete machine systems and chains of machines for the different product and techniques.
- Large scale melioration providing drainage and irrigation for fields and meadows, increasing soil fertility and stable, high yields.
- The use of chemical products to increase fertility of the soil and the performance of vegeable and animal stocks.
- The large scale drying of agricultural products, primarily feed, as a necessary condition for feed and animal production on a industrial basis.
- The raising of the general educational level and the continual extension of the vocational training of all working people as a necessary condition for the full utilisation of scientific and technical progress and for the conscious management of social relationships.

In the GDR, noteworthy results have been obtained in raising agricultural, production by the Marxist-Leninist agrarian policies which have been applied since 1945. Of outstanding importance, however, was the socialist transformation of the agricultural industry after 1952 as a condition necessary for the planned rapid economic growth and the development of socialist ways of life in rural communities.

The working class and the socialist state have given the agricultural industry decisive support in connection with the improvement of working conditions and the replacement of manual labour by work with machines. The main tasks associated with vegetable production have been allmost completely mechanised. Cereals are harvested completely by modern combine harvesters. 91 % of the area devoted to potato cultivation and 96 % of the area serving beet production are harvested by combines. [5] The expenditure associated with equipping a single work place in the agricultural industry with fixed assets has risen and is becoming increasingly comparable to other spheres of the economy.

In 1974, the mean value in marks of the fixed assets per working person was 54,539 in the economy as a whole, 70,251 in industry and 49,334 in agriculture. [5] Under industrial production conditions, the value of the fixed assets per work place has reached 600,000 marks in some cases in the agricultural industry.

The application of modern techniques has not only resulted in a reduction of heavy manual labour, but also permits the intensive utilisation and reproduction of the natural resources, particularly the improvement of tillage and the maintenance of soil fertility. For example, it has been possible to prevent such damage as soil compaction by implementing measures.

Large scale melioration providing irrigation and drainage for fields and meadows, increasing soil fertility and ensuring stable yields has resulted in the drainage of 1 100,000 ha and the irrigation of 567,000 ha since 1960. [9] Irrigation is to be provided for a further 480,000–520,000 ha. during the period 1976–1980. A necessary condition required to achieve this aim is the explotation of our water resources.

Melioration of the soil ensures the increasing and stable growth of yields and the agricultural performance. At the same time it is the condition necassary for the application of certain measures involving chemical products which increase yields, raise the fertility of the soil and improves the performance of vegetable and animal stocks. The application of chemical products in vegetable husbandry leads to the increased use of fertilizers, plant protection agents and pesticides of improved quality. All work associated with the application of chemicals in the agricultural industry are performed or managed by agrochemical centres (ACC). The ACC are enterprises with modern equipment which perform fertilizer application, plant protection and pest control tasks on the farms in conformity with the latest scientific knowledge. The ACC's work according to optimised fertilizing programs which are based on soil analyses and analyses of the plant stocks and are drawn up for all enterprises and cultivated areas in the GDR.

The application of chemical products in stock breeding maens the feeding animal stocks with synthetic feed containing protein as well as the provision of veterinary medicaments and disinfectants for the livestock, the working people and the environment.

The most importantsubjective condition for economic and social progress is the raising of the general educational level and vocational qualifications of all working people and the achievement of a fully developed socialist conscience.

In the GDR, there is a uniform eductional system for all citisens. This forms the basis for the development of personalities with an all-round eduction and for all further forms of training and education. In the agricultral industry of the GDR, 72 % of those employed had concluded some form of vocational training, including 6 % who had successfully graduated from a university or technical college, in 1974. In 1980, 90 % of the persons employed in the agricultural industry will have concluded some form of vocational training. [10]

The funcamental Marxist-Leninist standpoint that the most important productive force is the working people with their creative skills and abilities is convincingly reflected in the educational policies of the socialst countries, in the training of creative abilities and skills.

The socialist agricultural industry however, is not free from problems with regard to industrial types of production. As a matter of fact, the introduction of industrial types of production in agriculture is raising a multitude of questions which are directly concerned with the society-environment relation. Thus, the concentration of large stocks of animals is associated with the occurrence of large quantities of organic waste

matter which demands considerable expenditure to make it usable. The concentrated application of chemical products must be prepared with scientific precision and must be technically secured in order to prevent deleterious effects. Meliorative measures must be incorporated into the whole system of utilisation and preparation of the water resources. It is obviously necessary to observe such effects of economic development on the quality of the natural environment, since the durable, stable and continued further development of the welfare of society would otherwise be impossible. The resolutions taken at the XXVth Party Congress of the CPSU, the orientation given by the SED and by the communist parties and the parties of the working classes in the socialist countries state unambiguously how the protection of the environment is to be secured. In this connection, the socialist countries use not only national experience and energy as a basis. These fundamental problems are discussed within the framework of the CMEA and are also solved. The CMEA proposal regarding cooperation with the common market with respect to environmental protection opens huge perspectives. [11]

The far-sightedness and social provosions made for the development of society and natural resources is one of the advantages of socialism which, in view of the current crises in the capitalist world, is visible to all.

We stress once again that the necessary conditions for further development in rural territories are created by society as a whole. The town, industry and, in particular, working class exercise in this connection a leading and stimulating function from the technical, economic, social and political standpoints. The consequence is that the differences between town and country which arose in the course of history and, in the final analysis, were of a class nature, are being overcome.

The opportunities at the disposal of society to ensure further development in the interests of the increasing welfare of mankind and of greater social and political security must be sought primarily in

- the use of socialised means for peaceful purposes,
- the development of cooperation between countries and peoples in the economic sphere on the basis of the principles expounded in the Carter of the United Nations and peaceful coexistence as confirmed in Helsinki,
- the encouragement in all countries of democratic movements and social programs.

As we see, progressive social relationship are involved first and foremost. These form the decisive condition for the development of human and natural resources and for improving the environment and the way of life.

The contributation paid by sociology and sociologists is not unimportant in this respect, then the actual subject of their science is, finally, social relationships.

**Anmerkungen:**

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10) Entwurf der Direktive des IX. Parteitages der SED zur Entwicklung der Volkswirtschaft der DDR, in: Einheit, Heft 2/1976, S. 2[illegible]3

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